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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

How it serves people on the

**FARM and in the
COMMUNITY**

**NATION
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Your

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Your U.S. Department of Agriculture serves you daily. Directly and indirectly this Department safeguards and improves the production, processing, distribution, and marketing of the food, the clothing, and the forest products vital to your existence and enjoyment of life.

Besides working to increase farm and other income in rural areas, today's Department of Agriculture provides more direct services to consumers than any other agency of Government (75 cents of every dollar spent by USDA is for services of benefit to the general public)—to enlarge America's outdoor recreation facilities—to strengthen man's capacity to conserve and enhance man's total environment—to develop foreign markets for our agricultural products.

How It Started

Abraham Lincoln signed the congressional act creating the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1862. A little more than a quarter century later, Agriculture became the eighth executive department to achieve Cabinet rank. In those early days, the Department served a population most of whom were engaged in agriculture as a livelihood. A farmer in Lincoln's time produced only enough farm products to supply himself and three or four others.

How It Works

Today's Department serves a Nation in which only 6½ percent of the workers make a living in agriculture—a Nation in which efficient agricultural workers each provide food and fiber for themselves and 39 others. To meet changing and growing needs, USDA continually defines and adjusts its program objectives. The objectives are practical—to provide greater services to meet the growing needs of today and to plan ahead to meet the needs of Americans in the year 2000 and beyond. Nowhere is this more evident than in the forward-looking approach of the Department's AGRICULTURE/2000 mission—a Department-wide effort that sets program goals in terms as modern as tomorrow.

Relationship to Land-Grant Colleges

In 1862 Congress passed, and President Lincoln signed, the Land-Grant College Act. This act donated 11 million acres of public lands to the States and Territories to provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanical arts.

This act was followed by others to strengthen the experimental and extension activities of the States.

In 1887 Congress authorized an agricultural experiment station in each State and Territory.

In 1914 it established the Cooperative Extension Service for each State to extend agricultural and home economics research information of the Department and land-grant colleges to farmers and other people.

ACTIVITIES OF USDA

Research

USDA works closely on research with State experiment stations, State departments of agriculture, schools of forestry, farmer cooperatives, and other public and private agencies. It administers Federal grant funds voted for the States by Congress.

The *Agricultural Research Service* carries out research on crops, soil and water conservation, agricultural engineering, livestock, human nutrition, and home economics. ARS also develops new and expanded uses for farm commodities; conducts and administers a research program using the physical and biological sciences to solve problems of market quality, transportation, and facilities; and conducts control and regulatory programs, including plant and animal quarantines and animal disease eradication campaigns.

The *Cooperative State Research Service* administers (under the Hatch Act of 1955 and the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Act of 1962) Federal-grant payments for research at the agricultural experiment stations and eligible schools of forestry. CSRS also assists State experiment stations and USDA agencies in planning and coordinating scientific research programs.

The *Economic Research Service* does research in general economic and statistical analysis, marketing economics, farm and resource economics, and foreign economic analysis.

The *Farmer Cooperative Service* conducts economic research to help farmers market their products and purchase supplies. It also helps all rural people to obtain other business services through cooperatives.

The *Forest Service* carries on a broad research program through its eight regional forest experiment stations, the Forest Products Laboratory, and the Institute of Tropical Forestry. In these laboratories scientists study the establishment, improvement, growth, and harvesting of timber; protection of forests from fire, insects, diseases, and animal pests; management of rangelands; improvement and management of wildlife habitat; forest recreation; protection and management of watersheds; efficient marketing and utilization of forest products; forest engineering; forest genetics; and forest economics. A continuing forest survey provides comprehensive information on the extent and condition of forest lands, the volume and quality of timber resources, trends in timber growth and harvest, and the outlook for future supplies and demands.

Education

The *Cooperative Extension Service* is the field educational arm of the Department and land-grant colleges. Its work is jointly sponsored and financed by Federal, State, and local governments. The *Federal Extension Service* represents USDA in this activity.

In every rural county, extension workers conduct an educational program designed to help farm families and others use research findings and other Government aids. Through this program, extension workers provide assistance toward more efficient production and marketing of agricultural products, improved family living, and the advancement of community affairs.

The *Farmer Cooperative Service* reaches farmers and other rural people by conducting educational work to help them improve the effectiveness of their cooperatives. In these activities it cooperates with land-grant colleges, State extension offices and county agents, and with cooperatives and their State and national organizations.

The *National Agricultural Library*, probably the most extensive agricultural library in existence, collects and maintains worldwide publications in the agricultural, biological, and chemical sciences; serves the research, extension, regulatory, and other programs of the USDA and State agricultural agencies; extends services to other libraries, institutions, and the public; and provides, at cost, microfilm and photocopy of material in the collection. The library issues monthly the *Bibliography of Agriculture*, a comprehensive index to current agricultural literature, and biweekly the *Pesticides Documentation Bulletin*, an inventory of the multidiscipline literature in the pest control fields.

Information

Each USDA agency provides information on its work for farmers, consumers, and others. The *Office of Information* coordinates:

Publications, technical and popular, which present research results and program, regulatory, and other information on the work of USDA.

Current information, which includes press, radio, and television materials and special reports.

Visuals, which include exhibits, photos, graphics, and motion pictures.

Marketing and Consumer Services

The *Commodity Exchange Authority* keeps watch on and investigates traders' and brokers' operations on commodity exchanges to prevent price manipulation and fraud and to safeguard producer and consumer interests in pricing and marketing services of exchanges.

The *Consumer and Marketing Service* services, regulates, improves, and protects the marketing system—to help move our supply of food and other farm products from producer to consumer quickly and efficiently, with fairness to all.

C&MS protects consumers by inspecting meat and poultry and by providing inspection services for other foods and farm products.

It grades food and farm products, to help consumers and marketers to buy efficiently, and provides market news services, to help them make intelligent marketing decisions.

Its regulatory duties include administering such laws as the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, the U.S. Warehouse Act, the Federal Seed Act, and marketing agreements and orders.

C&MS also operates a number of consumer food programs—National School Lunch, Special Milk, Commodity Distribution, Food Stamp, Child Nutrition, and Plentiful Foods.

And C&MS strives to improve the system further by issuing marketing guides, seeking surplus removal outlets, aiding individual States through the matching fund program, and helping to provide efficient transportation services at reasonable rates.

USDA's *Packers and Stockyards Administration*, which administers the Packers and Stockyards Act, helps to maintain free and open competition in the marketing

of the Nation's livestock, poultry, and meat production. The P&S Act prohibits unfair, deceptive, discriminatory, and monopolistic marketing practices which would deprive the farmer of a fair price for his product and the marketer of a reasonable profit for his services, and unduly affect consumer prices for meat and poultry.

Trade and Aid

The *Foreign Agricultural Service* administers USDA foreign programs in the interest of U.S. agriculture, with special emphasis on market promotion abroad. Attachés at 60 foreign posts maintain a constant flow of world agricultural information.

The *International Agricultural Development Service* coordinates the Department's participation in overseas technical assistance programs. Its work includes sending agricultural technicians abroad and training foreign specialists in the United States.

Economics

The *Economic Research Service* analyzes factors affecting farm production, prices and income, and the outlook for various commodities. It studies production efficiency, marketing costs and potentials, rural development and agricultural trade, production, and Government policies.

The *Statistical Reporting Service* reports on crop and livestock production and prices paid and received by farmers, conducts surveys of consumer purchases and attitudes, and keeps statistical methods used by USDA accurate and responsive to changing needs.

Conservation

The *Soil Conservation Service* develops and carries out a national soil and water conservation program through nearly 3,000 soil conservation districts—districts with more than 2 million cooperating landowners and farm operators. This agency also provides USDA leadership for: Watershed protection projects, the Great Plains conservation program, resource conservation and development projects, income-producing recreation enterprises, river basin investigations, flood damage reductions in 11 major watersheds, and the National Inventory of Soil and Water Conservation Needs. In addition, SCS administers the Federal part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey and makes and coordinates snow surveys for water forecasting in the Western States.

The *Forest Service* is another USDA agency primarily concerned with protection and development of our nat-

ural resources. The Forest Service administers 154 national forests and 19 national grasslands containing 186 million acres in 41 States and Puerto Rico. These lands are managed for multiple use and sustained yield of all the renewable natural resources including timber, water, forage, special products, fish and wildlife, natural beauty, and outdoor recreation.

Besides this the Forest Service cooperates with State agencies and private forest owners (1) to protect the 450 million acres of State and privately owned forests and critical watersheds against fire, insects, and diseases, (2) to encourage better forest practices for multiple use and profit on the 367 million acres of private forest land, (3) to aid in production and distribution of planting stock for forest and shelterbelt planting, (4) to provide technical assistance in utilization and marketing of forest products, and (5) to stimulate proper management of State, county, and community forests.

Stabilization

The *Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service* is responsible for—

- Administering the national agricultural conservation program that yearly shares with more than 1 million farmers and ranchers the costs of establishing approved soil and water conserving practices.

- Providing acreage allotments and marketing quotas, to help keep supplies in line with demand.

- Administering the feed grain program to maintain a balanced production by diverting corn and grain sorghum acreage to conservation use and to provide co-operators with loans and price-support payments.

- Administering the wheat program providing to co-operators domestic marketing certificates and price-support loans.

- Administering the cotton program to reduce the surplus through domestic acreage allotments, price-support loans and payments, and payments for diverting cotton acreage to conservation use.

- Administering the cropland adjustment program to shift land, through payments under long-term agreements, from crops now in plentiful supply to a conservation use. CAP's Greenspan provision has helped State and local government agencies acquire such cropland for nonfarm, public benefit uses with payments on the same basis as those to farmers.

- Administering price-supports for numerous commodities and management of commodity inventory.

- Assisting the Foreign Agricultural Service in foreign sales, donations, and barter of commodities under Public Law 480 and assisting the Consumer and Marketing Service in donating commodities through domestic channels.

- Helping obtain adequate farm and commercial storage for farm products.

- Administering the Sugar Act, the National Wool Act, and the International Wheat Agreement.

- Assisting farmers in designated areas during natural disasters and other emergencies.

The *Commodity Credit Corporation*, with its \$14,500 million borrowing authority, finances the price-support program, domestic and export surplus commodity disposal, foreign assistance, storage activities, and other such programs and operations of the Department.

The *Federal Crop Insurance Corporation* provides farmers with all risk insurance protection of production expenses incurred as a result of weather, insect, or disease damage. This keeps the rural economy going in those years when drought or other natural disasters cut crop yields and leave farmers with a short crop, or no crop, to sell. FCIC protection is available in more than one-third of the Nation's farm counties.

Rural Areas Development

USDA provides leadership in helping local groups build "communities of tomorrow"—communities with their own source of employment, their own factories, their own modern schools and nearby college or university, their own medical center, and their own cultural, entertainment, and recreational opportunities.

USDA personnel set up technical action panels to advise local rural areas development committees and other locally organized groups. A local county Extension agent—representing the Cooperative Federal-State Extension Services—often serves as an executive secretary for a local rural development group. The technical action panels help rural people learn about and use Federal programs to create jobs, fight poverty, build new businesses and industry, develop water supplies and other needed community facilities, replace substandard housing, improve or create outdoor recreation opportunities, upgrade agriculture, and carry out conservation, beautification, and other projects which strengthen the rural economy.

Representatives of USDA agencies in the area serve on the panels, with the *Farmers Home Administration* supervisor as chairman. Local representatives of other Federal

or State development agencies, local government, universities and colleges, and others with the technical knowledge useful to rural areas development who wish to serve are invited to participate. The *Rural Community Development Service* works with other Federal agencies to help them extend government services to rural areas.

Other USDA agencies which help rural areas development with financial and technical assistance and which serve on State, area, and local technical action panels include *Forest Service*, *Rural Electrification Administration*, *Farmer Cooperative Service*, *Consumer and Marketing Service*, *Agricultural Research Service*, *Cooperative State Research Service*, *Economic Research Service*, *Federal Crop Insurance Corporation*, and *Statistical Reporting Service*.

Credit

Vital financial assistance is provided through the *Farmers Home Administration*. This agency strengthens family farm and rural communities through credit accompanied by technical and management assistance.

Funds are advanced for: Farm operating expenses; purchase, enlargement, and improvement of family farms; construction and purchase of rural homes and farm service buildings; development of community water and waste disposal systems, and recreational facilities; development of farm enterprises and trades and services that raise the incomes and improve the level of living of low-income rural people; rural renewal projects; watershed development; soil and water conservation; shifts in land use; rental housing for low-income rural people including senior citizens; farm labor housing; and the emergency credit needs of farmers.

Loans supplement and in no case compete with credit provided by other lenders. There is an FHA office serving every rural county of the United States.

The *Rural Electrification Administration* makes long-term loans to provide initial and continuing electric service in unserved rural areas. Most borrowers are nonprofit, consumer-owned cooperatives.

REA also makes loans to extend and improve telephone service in rural areas. Loans are made to telephone companies and to nonprofit associations.

Emergency Programs

An emergency organization coordinated and directed by an assistant to the Secretary has been set up within USDA at national, State, and county levels to handle both natural disasters and defense programs. Those admin-

istering programs to feed people and to help farmers affected by floods, drought, and other natural disasters would use this experience to meet USDA responsibilities in the event of nuclear war. In the national defense program, USDA is responsible for food from farmer to retailer, for emergency food stockpiling, for radiological defense and fire control in rural areas, and biological and chemical warfare defense for animals and crops.

HOW USDA IS ORGANIZED

SECRETARY

Under Secretary

Staff Assistants

General Counsel

Inspector General

Departmental Administration

Assistant Secretary for Administration

Budget and Finance, Office of

Hearing Examiners, Office of

Information, Office of

Management Improvement, Office of

Management Services, Office of

Personnel, Office of

Plant and Operations, Office of

Agricultural Economics

Director

Economic Research Service

Statistical Reporting Service

Rural Development and Conservation

Assistant Secretary

Farmer Cooperative Service

Farmers Home Administration

Forest Service

Rural Community Development Service

Rural Electrification Administration

Soil Conservation Service

Agricultural Stabilization

Under Secretary

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

Commodity Credit Corporation

Federal Crop Insurance Corporation

International Affairs

Assistant Secretary

Foreign Agricultural Service

International Agricultural Development Service

Marketing and Consumer Services

Assistant Secretary

Commodity Exchange Authority

Consumer and Marketing Service

Packers and Stockyards Administration

Science and Education

Director

Agricultural Research Service

Cooperative State Research Service

Federal Extension Service

National Agricultural Library

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